

Message Text

SECRET

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ACTION SS-25

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P R 221600 Z MAR 73
FM AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE
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INFO AMEMBASSY BONN
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AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN
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AMEMBASSY PARIS
USDEL PARIS
AMEMBASSY ROME

S E C R E T THE HAGUE 1363

EXDIS

E. O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, VN, NL
SUBJECT: DUTCH FOREIGN MINISTER' S COMMENTS ON OPENING
OF RELATIONS WITH NORTH VIETNAM

REF: THE HAGUE 1335 AND 1334

1. DURING MY CONVERSATION WITH FONMIN SCHMELZER ON MORNING MARCH 22, HE BROUGHT UP GON DECISION TO MOVE AHEAD ON OPENING RELATIONS WITH NVN AND APPEALED FOR US UNDERSTANDING ON THIS DIFFICULT ISSUE. SERIOUS PROBLEM HAD BEEN BREWING IN DUTCH PARLIAMENT OVER GON' S DELAY IN ESTABLISHING RELATIONS WITH NVN, SCHMELZER SAID, AND LABOR PARTY' S FOREIGN POLICY EXPERT DANKERT' S EXPLICIT QUESTIONS RE DELAY HAD MADE PROBLEM MORE ACUTE (THE HAGUE 1333). ONLY REASON HE HAD POSTPONED ANNOUNCEMENT HE HAD BEEN SCHEDULED TO MAKE ON MARCH 16 (THE HAGUE 1266) WAS VERY STRONG APPROACH I HAD MADE TO HIM LAST WEEK AS WELL AS HIS DEEP RESPECT FOR MY GOVT AND FOR ME PERSONALLY (THE HAGUE 1238). IF GON HAD DELAYED ANY LONGER, SCHMELZER SAID,
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THERE WOULD HAVE BEEN TREMENDOUS STORM IN PARLIAMENT AND ENSUING DEBATE COULD HAVE DONE REAL HARM TO US- DUTCH RELATIONS. HE NOTED THAT BENELUX COUNTRIES AND ITALY HAD REACHED COMMON DECISION TO OPEN RELATIONS AT THIS TIME.

2. SCHMELZER ALSO SAID THAT IT WAS TOO BAD IT HAD NOT BEEN POSSIBLE TO GET INDEPENDENT REPORT FROM ICCS ON NVN VIOLATIONS. WITHOUT THIS, HE WOULD HAVE BEEN IN EXPOSED POSITION AT OUTSET OF PARLIAMENTARY DEBATE. ON POSITIVE SIDE HE FELT THAT BY TAKING THIS STEP DUTCH MIGHT BE IN POSITION TO EXERT SOME INFLUENCE ON DRV IF IT CONTINUES TO VIOLATE PARIS AGREEMENTS.

3. IT WAS APPARENT THAT SCHMELZER HAD REACHED THIS DECISION ONLY AFTER GREAT DEAL OF SOUL- SEARCHING. IN VIEW OF WHAT HE HAD TOLD ME IN OUR LAST CONVERSATION, I SURMISED THAT HE HAD REGRETFULLY CONCLUDED THAT DISADVANTAGES OF FURTHER POSTPONEMENT, INCLUDING ACRIMONIOUS AND ADVERSE PARLIAMENTARY DEBATE, OUTWEIGHED DISADVANTAGES OF ACTING NOW. SCHMELZER CONCLUDED THIS PART OF CONVERSATION WITH STRONG APPEAL THAT I USE MY POSITION AS AMBASSADOR TO ASSURE THAT WASHINGTON WOULD UNDERSTAND WHY GON FELT THAT IT HAD TO MOVE AHEAD. I HOPE INDEED THAT WASHINGTON WILL UNDERSTAND GREAT PRESSURES ON SCHMELZER TO ACT WITHOUT FURTHER DELAY. I HOPE ALSO THAT WASHINGTON WILL KEEP IN MIND COOPERATIVE AND HELPFUL POSITION WHICH GON HAS CONSISTENTLY TAKEN UNDER SCHMELZER'S TENURE ON MOST POLITICAL, ECONOMIC AND MILITARY ISSUES OF MAJOR IMPORTANCE TO US.
MIDDENDORF

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*** Current Classification *** SECRET

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